

U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☒ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other
☐ Charter ☒ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Natalie Miller

Official School Name: Sierra Elementary

School Mailing Address:
1100 Thompson Way
Placerville, CA 95667-5726

County: El Dorado State School Code Number*: 0961952

Telephone: (530) 622-0814 Fax: (530) 622-0532

Web site/URL: http://www.pusd.k12.ca.us/ E-mail: nmiller@pusdk8.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Nancy Lynch

District Name: Placerville Union Elementary Tel: (530) 622-7216

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Ms. Misty diVittorio

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 2 | Elementary schools |
| 1 | Middle schools |
| 0 | Junior high schools |
| 0 | High schools |
| 1 | Other |
| 4 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7780

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 8117

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☐ Suburban
☒ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 6 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

0 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
K	36	42	78	8	0	0	0
1	40	37	77	9	0	0	0
2	34	26	60	10	0	0	0
3	35	46	81	11	0	0	0
4	32	33	65	12	0	0	0
5	28	28	56	Other	0	0	0
6	0	0	0				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL							417

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
20 % Hispanic or Latino
1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
74 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 21 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	47
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	35
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	82
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	387
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.212
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	21.189

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 14 %

Total number limited English proficient 57

Number of languages represented: 3

Specify languages:

Portugese, Russian, Spanish

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 51 %

Total number students who qualify: 212

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

Total Number of Students Served: 53

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>31</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>5</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>16</u>	<u>4</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Support staff	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>28</u>	<u>14</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	94%	94%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	96%	97%	98%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

2005-2006 Snow day

2004-2005 Illness

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	<u>0</u>	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u>	%
Found employment	<u>0</u>	%
Military service	<u>0</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
Total	<u>100</u>	%

PART III - SUMMARY

“Sierra School, in a working partnership with families and the community, promises to establish and sustain an enriched educational environment for each student. We are committed to empowering all students to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world with academic excellence built on the foundations of unity, responsibility, and success.”

Sierra School has served the children of Placerville for fifty-four years since its dedication in 1953. The School has evolved from a six room school into an exciting educational community that serves over 400 students in grades kindergarten through five. Located in the heart of El Dorado County, our hilltop location allows us to overlook our county seat, the city of Placerville. Our students and staff enjoy a campus that is surrounded by the beauty of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. From every vantage point, we are part of the natural scene. Our “city” location belies our rural roots with many of our students traveling for miles through the foothills to attend this unique elementary school.

With history on our doorstep, Sierra students’ academic experiences are enriched by the Placerville community. Walking field trips take our students to various community partners including the local fire house, Placerville Hardware, the post office, the police station, Gold Bug Mine, Marshall Hospital, area parks, theater performances at the local high school, and numerous historic landmarks. Our local police officers make regular stops to our campus to meet and greet the students. Sierra students are visible members of this close-knit community.

As one of the oldest schools in the county, Sierra has maintained a long standing tradition of educational excellence. Within a diverse ethnic and socio-economic campus, Sierra students are encouraged to celebrate their differences. The positive atmosphere and spirit of togetherness is reinforced each morning as the entire student body and staff gather on our playground for Morning Stretch. Students are recognized at monthly assemblies that celebrate individual and grade level achievement. From the Principal, our school mascot, Sparky, and nominated fourth and fifth grade students serving as Principal’s for a Day, students receive Positive Action certificates that reflect the character trait of the month.

Academically, all Sierra students are challenged to meet and exceed grade level standards. Starting with a full-day kindergarten and a unique kindergarten/parent participation program called “Right Start,” our students begin their educational journey with tremendous support from staff, parents, and the community. Students are continually instructed in and measured against the content standards and have made record growth in all areas. As a Title I school, we have put numerous programs in place to close the achievement gap for underperforming students. In both 2008 and 2009, our student progress earned Sierra state recognition as a California Title I Academic Achievement Award winning school. Our crowning achievement for 2008 was receiving the California Distinguished School Award. Our 2008 California Department of Education Academic Performance Index (API) of 873, which was a 42 point increase from 2007, validates Sierra’s continued commitment to leaving no child behind.

In response to Sierra’s dedication to meeting the needs of the “whole child”, we have incorporated a Fine Arts Mini Experience (FAME). This program, for all Sierra students, reinforces the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards, exposes our entire student body to a series of artists, composers, and their works and affords our teachers time for collaboration and planning. Application of Technology is integrated across subject areas and along with Physical Education is built into each student’s weekly schedule.

With a commitment to shared leadership, every Sierra staff member is dedicated to the principles of: building on strengths, unity of purpose, and empowerment. Working in cooperation with our parents and community partners, Sierra School is a dynamic, enriched and nurturing environment where every student can succeed.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

The California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program includes annual standards based assessments for students in grades two through twelve. At Sierra School tests are administered in grades two through five. The STAR battery of tests includes the California Standards Tests (CSTs) for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. These multiple choice tests are designed to measure student achievement of their grade level standards. Results of these tests determine the progress of each individual student, each grade level and the overall performance of the school.

Other tests administered at Sierra that make up the STAR Program include California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). This test is individually administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The California Modified Assessment (CMA) was implemented in 2008 and was given to students with disabilities who performed far below or below basic on a previous CST. The Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS) are required for students who are English Learners in grades 2-4 and who have been enrolled in a United States school for less than 12 months. A Writing Assessment is given in both fourth and seventh grades. Results of this test are scored on an eight point rubric and included in the spring testing scores.

Individual student results are classified as Advanced, Proficient, Basic, Below Basic or Far Below Basic. Following the No Child Left Behind guidelines it is our goal to have all students performing at the Proficient or Advanced levels. Student achievement is measured using scaled scores and reported as a school's Academic Performance Index (API), Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) and Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). As this testing protocol has been implemented, the California Department of Education (CDE) has set minimum standards for achievement which have been met and exceeded by the students at Sierra.

With an initial goal of reaching an API of 800, the mark set by CDE as proficient, Sierra met that challenge in 2006 when our API reached 802. We continue to make progress in all areas and with all of our significant subgroups. These include a growing population of Hispanic students and English Learners, a low-socioeconomic subgroup of 51% and the district Special Education Special Day Class (SDC). Our API scores have soared from 802 in 2006 to 840 in 2007 and 873 in 2008's spring testing. We have shown significant growth in all areas but our most outstanding statistic from last year's testing was having 0 students in the Far Below category for Math. Quite an achievement!

Schools in California are also measured on a ten point scale based on the STAR testing results. Schools are ranked in two ways, a State Rank, comparing results from every school in the state and a Similar School Rank, which compares a school to 100 other state schools with similar demographics. Looking at five years of rankings, in 2003 Sierra received a State Rank of 7 and a Similar School Rank of a 2. In 2004 we improved to a State Rank of 8 and a Similar School Rank of 7 but took a downward turn in 2005, earning a State Rank of 6 and a Similar School Rank of 1, the lowest possible score. An in-depth analysis of our programs resulted in changes to interventions, curriculum alignment and the formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). These changes helped put us back on track in 2006 and our State Rank improved to a 7 and our Similar School Rank improved to a 4. In 2007 the rankings continued to improve with Sierra now at an 8 for the State Rank and a 9 among our band of Similar Schools. The rankings based on the 2008 testing will not be available until spring 2009, but we are confident that our rankings will continue to increase. Moving our school from a Similar School Rank of 1 in 2005 to a 9 in 2007 is a remarkable achievement and a ringing endorsement of the improvements in academic programming and instructional strategies that we have implemented here at Sierra.

Test results for Sierra School as well as information on the state assessment system may be found at the following website: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>

2. Using Assessment Results:

Assessment of student progress and the use of data to direct our instruction is an ongoing process at Sierra School. Heeding the call for better assessment quality and analysis, we now use a school-wide sequential approach that includes common grade level summative and formative assessments. The results of these assessments and our California Standards Tests are disaggregated and used to appropriately place students, plan our instruction and monitor their progress.

We measure individual student progress throughout the year using multiple measures based on standard assessments combined with standardized rubrics. This allows staff members to disaggregate data more effectively. Our data management system, Data Director, provides detailed assessment results that summarize student proficiency on specific standards as they relate to individual questions. Teachers use the data to guide their instruction and pacing. Disaggregated results show teachers where remediation or enrichment may be needed.

State-mandated testing and local assessment results become our focus at the beginning of each school year. Assessments are analyzed for the school, each grade level, individual students, and sub-groups. Analysis of the results informs the direction that each grade level takes with regard to closing the achievement gaps for underperforming students and differentiating curriculum for high achieving students. Teachers work in grade level teams to disaggregate former and current students' performance and discuss adjustments that may need to be made in this year's instruction.

Using our Response to Intervention process all students are visually tracked on their performance on STAR tests and local assessments on student achievement boards. Students who have performed below the proficient level are placed in intervention programs and tracked for progress. Our Title I team and classrooms teachers keep a historical record for each student that outlines their intervention programs and tracks their progress. Using a collective approach to analyzing and using assessment data we have created an effective and consistent system that has helped to raise achievement levels for all of our students.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Annual performance goals are shared with staff members at our initial August staff meeting, with Site Council at their first yearly meeting, and with parents through our weekly school to home newsletter, The Sierra Scoop. Staff members design an action plan to meet the district expectations. Site Council members collaborate to adopt the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) and Library Plan which supports and reflects the goals of the district. Progress toward our goals is constantly monitored and reported out to all stakeholders.

Our computerized report card, based on the California State Standards, and our on-line grading system is linked to the Aeries student information system. This technology enables immediate access to a student's academic history and is then accessible to the students' current and future teachers, our Student Success Team called PATCH (Promoting Achievement Through Caring Hearts) process and district office personnel. Parents have access to their child's assignments and grades through their home computer.

Student progress is communicated to families through progress reports and through our on-line grading system. At the end of our first trimester, all parents/caregivers are invited to a parent/teacher conference. Each student's progress is shared through a review of their portfolio of work; their standards based report card in either English or Spanish, and a multiple measures profile. The School Accountability Report Card is updated annually and available online to the school community and the general public.

With powerful learning opportunities as a hallmark for student success at Sierra, high achievement becomes the focus of every child, parent, care-giver, and staff member. To build capacity for success, the expectations for all students are expressed by the principal and staff members through daily student contact, weekly newsletters,

personal contact with parents, and monthly communication with Parent Club and Site Council. The clear message that Sierra School has high expectations for all students is articulated throughout our educational program.

4. Sharing Success:

The academic success of our students and the distinction of being a two time California Title I Academic Achievement Award school (2008 & 2009) partnered with the 2008 California Distinguished School Award have made Sierra a model school within El Dorado County. With a predominance of small school districts in our area we rely on our County Office of Education for many services. Sierra staff members participate in representative group meetings for elementary principals, staff development opportunities and a monthly Curriculum Council. Many of the practices that have made Sierra successful have been highlighted at these meetings prompting the sharing of information with individual administrators, local teachers and visits to Sierra from other county schools.

Last year Sierra presented a pilot program, No-Go-Tell, for student wellness at a county symposium featuring Safe Schools. We also posted one of our Title I signature practices, Right Start, a literacy program for kindergarten students and their parents, on the CDE Title I Academic Achievement Award website.

In our own district Sierra sets the pace for our elementary schools. Sierra staff members have lead the way working with their grade level colleagues to implement changes in curriculum and assessment. They serve as teacher leaders for math and language arts and share successful practices that have been adopted by our staff. Four Sierra teachers facilitated the district staff development trainings for the implementation of our Step Up To Writing program.

Currently, two Sierra kindergarten teachers serve as district leads for the First 5 Early Childhood Readiness initiative in our county. Programs at Sierra, such as Right Start, a kindergarten parent literacy program, have been shared as a model program for this preschool to kindergarten connection.

In short, Sierra is proud of our many achievements. As a Blue Ribbon School we will continue to be an active participant in local, state and national forums sharing our signature practices and opening our doors to interested educators.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Standards referenced or standards based? This provocative question became the catalyst that moved Sierra School from good to great. The need was recognized to find balance between the California Content Standards and providing an environment that includes high expectations and stimulating instructional programs based on interesting and relevant applications for the whole child.

To support our goal of all students reading at grade level we implemented a school wide reading program, in addition to grade level core instruction using state adopted textbooks aligned to the California State Standards. Sierra's Flexible Reading program enhances our reading instruction, providing students with a more individualized approach to improve and develop their reading skills and strategies. We designed this program using the research based Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS) program, to meet the needs of individual readers through differentiated instruction. Daily reading instruction at Sierra consists of Flexible Reading groups, core instruction and comprehension strategies taught whole class and in small groups. Weekly supplemental activities may include computer programs such as Skills Tutor and Book Flix. Our Title I teacher and several highly qualified paraeducators support the reading program with push-in and pull-out programs.

The Step Up to Writing Program was adopted by our school district to provide a continuum of writing instruction for grades kindergarten through eight. This process provides our students with common language and writing strategies as they progress through each grade level.

Math is an area of great strength at Sierra. Professional Learning Communities took an in-depth look at grade level standards, aligning them to the core curriculum and developing activities to enhance instruction. Moving from concrete to conceptual, lessons incorporate hands on activities, use of manipulatives and opportunities for experiential learning. Remediation is provided by a credentialed math tutor, pull-out Title I Math Workshops, and leveled math instruction for all fourth and fifth grade students. Sequential Math, a timed math fact program, enhances students' proficiency laying the foundation for higher success in more complex mathematical concepts.

Creating authentic activities is a goal for our Social Studies and Science instruction. A walk around campus could find you face to face with a group of Colonial Americans, observing students involved in a science experience utilizing the Scientific Method, taking an interactive virtual field trip to Williamsburg, planting native flora or performing a musical based on the Solar System.

Our Fine Arts Mini Experience (F.A.M.E.) provides exposure to artists and composers through interactive lessons. Twice monthly students attend a F.A.M.E. class taught by two retired Sierra teachers. Furthermore, classroom teachers incorporate Visual and Performing Arts Standards (VAPA) with Social Studies, Science and literature.

Formal Physical Education is taught at each grade level by classroom teachers. Teachers develop a yearly plan that teaches age appropriate skills and fitness.

Our character education program for grades K – 3 is Positive Action. Students are taught to model each positive character trait of the program through teacher directed class meetings and time spent on conflict/resolution skill development. The students who most exemplify the "word of the month" are recognized at our monthly Positive Action Assembly. Parents and family members attend to see their child receive an award certificate and come on stage to shake hands with our school mascot, Sparky. Our 4/5 Academy teachers use Ron Clark's *Essential 55* as the basis for their character education program. Students who best exemplify the *Essential 55* are recognized

at a 4/5 Academy celebration every six weeks. Additionally, two students per month who exemplify leadership, citizenship, academic achievement and responsibility are chosen by their teachers to serve as Principals for a Day.

With a school-wide commitment to educating the whole child, building on strengths and empowerment our classrooms are filled with well-rounded, engaged, enthusiastic and energetic learners who will be ready to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Sierra uses the Houghton Mifflin, state adopted core reading program. Using this as a jumping off point we supplement this curriculum with specific activities and defined strategies based on *Reading Power* by Adrienne Gear. These strategies have been used to develop comprehension and create more successful readers.

In an effort to address teachers' concerns of meeting the needs of all students and differentiating curriculum, a school wide reading program was developed. For the past six years at Sierra, the research based Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS), has been used as the cornerstone of our Flexible Reading program. Each morning, for 50 minutes, students "Walk to Read" moving to their flexible, leveled reading class. During this time students participate in direct phonics instruction, leveled reading instruction, fluency activities and comprehension strategies. Depending on the reading level of the group, instruction spans from basic sound and sight word instruction to literature circles. Reading strategies such as inference and prediction, and components of literature such as character analysis and author's message are explored.

Seeking to build a connection between the home and school as early as possible, we invite our kindergarten parents/guardians along with community volunteers to Right Start, a monthly interactive family literacy program.

PALS Reading is one of our Title I programs. Fourth and fifth grade students apply to become Big PALS. After intensive training Big PALS meet with their first grade Little PALS. These partners work together three days per week using decodable text.

Creating an environment that encourages students to read always and everywhere is a large part of our library program. The library at Sierra has become much more than a home for books; it is a place that fosters achievement and personal growth for our students and their families.

Reading is a priority at Sierra. Family Reading Night, Buddy Readers, a vibrant library program, and many other opportunities help to instill a lifelong love of reading.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

With a school-wide mission to close the achievement gap, Math has become a curricular strength at Sierra School. Our journey to success began with an awareness of the discrepancies between the California content standards and our curriculum.

With support from the El Dorado County Office of Education, the Sierra staff took an in-depth look at our math curriculum and delivery. A Math Teacher Leader was selected to lead our staff through a complete review of the California standards and the adopted curriculum which supports them. During this two year process the teacher leader set a monthly agenda, met with PLC's and with the faculty as a whole. Grade level teams were challenged to analyze the curriculum and systematically tie it to the standards. Emphasis was placed on identifying the key standards. Teachers combed through all math units ensuring each lesson was relevant to the State Standards. Through this process each grade level developed a pacing guide and check off sheets for standard coverage and

student assessment. A deeper, working knowledge of every strand and its elements was acquired. Our staff took this process a step further by analyzing data and comparing instructional practices with those of their colleagues.

Increased assistance for students not meeting standards, and/or scoring basic or below on the state standardized test was initiated with support from the School Site Council. This included the addition of a math tutor; Early Birds, a before school math remediation program; and technology support in an after school class. In 2008 the staff's efforts and students' progress was validated. The achievement gap was significantly narrowed as measured on the California state standardized test. We were elated and gratified when not one of our students scored in the far below basic range in math.

4. Instructional Methods:

One of the hallmarks of a great school is the ability to recognize the needs of all students. Sierra's focus on "success for all" has resulted in a blanket of support that includes services to meet the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of every child. Through the tiers of Response to Intervention (RtI) our "at risk" students are monitored and recommended for interventions that may range from academic to psychological. Advanced and Proficient, along with underperforming students, are charted with detailed lists of ongoing extensions and Tier 1/Tier 2 interventions. Our McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison, district psychologist and New Morning Counselor provide support services when recommended.

Targeted reading instruction is provided for first through third grades in cross grade level groups. Title I supports the program providing instruction for identified students delivered by a credentialed teacher and several paraeducators. English Learners are clustered for Flex Reading time. Instruction is provided by a bilingual teacher and paraeducator. Title I also supports at risk first graders through a program called PALS. Fourth and fifth grade Big PALS serve as tutors/mentors for first grade partners. Other remediation supports include an Early Birds reading program and an after school Power Hour. Intermediate students are part of our multiage 4/5 Academy. This program groups students by ability for Language Arts and Math and is supported by our Title I team.

Special Education students are mainstreamed and receive instruction in the Resource Center and/or a self-contained Special Day Class. Placement and curricular needs are based on IEP goals with consistent monitoring of their achievement by Special Education and regular education teachers.

Gifted and Talented Education (G.A.T.E.) students are served in regular education classrooms. Instruction is differentiated according to their Differentiated Learning Plans which are designed by their teachers. These plans focus on the acceleration and extension of curriculum. Identified students participate in an after school program, field trips and special events that are coordinated by our staff G.A.T.E. liaison.

Sierra provides a nurturing community for all learners and truly exemplifies an environment where success is attainable for all!

5. Professional Development:

The goal of Sierra School's professional development plan is to support all teachers and staff to prepare students to meet high academic standards by providing time for specialized training and collaboration. Our core belief is that by aligning instruction across curricular areas, we will create a strong academic program in both curriculum and instruction for each student.

Every teacher has been trained in Response to Intervention (RtI). Through the tiers of RtI our students are monitored and, if necessary, recommended for intervention. At regular meetings students' growth is graphed and modifications are discussed. Teachers work together in order to ensure each student's needs are being met and appropriate interventions are in place.

Sierra School continues to foster the development of PLC's. Allowing educators the time to share and learn alongside one another has proven beneficial to the teachers and the students. Weekly grade level planning time is yet another way to ensure common learning goals and objectives.

Each teacher has been trained on the Data Director system. The teachers and administrator are now able to review past and present assessment data and discuss ways to improve instructional strategies in order to better student achievement.

Using a Teacher Leader to improve our writing instruction, Sierra has adopted the Step Up to Writing (SUTW) program. With a team of trained teachers and guidance from the Teacher Leader, all teachers were trained in this sequential writing process. The program, now in its third year, is producing remarkable results from kindergarten to fifth grade. The California State Writing Assessment for fourth grade students exemplifies our progress from 47% proficient in 2006 to 63% proficient in 2008.

At Sierra, Peer Poaching, a strategy that allows educators an opportunity to observe and share effective practices with their colleagues, is offered throughout the year. This provides teachers and paraeducators with opportunities to develop new ideas and strategies, opens dialogue between grade levels, and encourages collaboration.

The common ground of a shared vision encourages the spirit of collaboration through on-going staff development and ultimately the success of our students.

6. School Leadership:

As a former member of the Accelerated School Project (ASP), Sierra's community has actively participated in a shared leadership approach to governance. The shift from a top-down administrative model was replaced with a model where the principal became a coach, incorporating and encouraging shared leadership for all stakeholders. Working collaboratively over the last decade we have built our vision on the ASP principles of: Unity of Purpose, Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility, and Building on Strengths. Using the ASP system built capacity for change and made our transition to PLC's straightforward and effective.

Our PLC's, with the guidance of a "teacher leader", began reviewing programs and practices at every grade level. Staff members developed pacing schedules, aligned and mapped curriculum with standards, and identified key standards in several curricular areas. All stakeholders share the responsibility for the decisions and the outcomes. The result has been a shared common purpose for our entire school community measured quantitatively by increased student achievement as evidenced by our STAR test scores and an 873 API score that has risen from 757 in five years.

Another aspect of shared leadership is our PATCH (Promoting Achievement Through Caring Hearts) Team. PATCH, Sierra's version of a Student Success Team, is made up of a teacher facilitator, 6 teachers from different grade levels, our resource specialist, principal, district psychologist and the parents of referred students. Collectively, the team reviews the data and makes recommendations for further intervention using our Response to Intervention three tiered model.

Sierra School's shared leadership model has resulted in all stakeholders taking an active role in the education of our students. An additional benefit has been a more visible principal who is able to foster a positive and caring school climate. Our student achievement reflects our school motto; "Sierra School, Where Learning Never Ends."

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 2

Test: STAR - California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Services

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	83	84	76	70	52
Advanced	58	43	35	26	16
Number of students tested	73	63	51	72	74
Percent of total students tested	95	98	98	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	0	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	75	79	27	61	34
Advanced	53	31	17	21	11
Number of students tested	32	29	22	36	35
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient	70	36		53	
Advanced	40	9		7	
Number of students tested	10	11		15	
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient				64	33
Advanced				18	17
Number of students tested				11	12
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative testing - California Alternative Performance Assessment (CAPA). This assessment is given to students with significant cognitive disabilities when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 2

Test: STAR -California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Services

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	55	63	57	37	36
Advanced	18	25	20	8	9
Number of students tested	73	63	51	72	74
Percent of total students tested	95	98	98	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0	0	2	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	0	0	3	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	44	59	59	28	23
% Advanced	3	14	5	3	6
Number of students tested	32	29	22	36	35
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	20	27		20	
% Advanced	10	9		7	
Number of students tested	10	11		15	
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced				18	42
% Advanced				0	8
Number of students tested				11	12
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Testing - California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). Students with significant cognitive disabilities are given this assessment when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: STAR - California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Services

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	79	74	85	52	77
Advanced	39	42	47	22	41
Number of students tested	57	50	68	76	76
Percent of total students tested	95	94	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	3	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	6	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	78	71	72	38	67
Advanced	26	35	37	14	30
Number of students tested	23	24	32	37	27
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient			82		
Advanced			24		
Number of students tested			17		
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient			73	13	67
Advanced			36	0	33
Number of students tested			11	15	12
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Testing - California Alternative Performance Assessment (CAPA). Students with significant cognitive disabilities are given this assessment when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: STAR - California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Service

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	55	54	47	25	54
Advanced	25	10	13	8	16
Number of students tested	57	50	69	76	76
Percent of total students tested	95	94	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	3	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	48	54	44	22	33
Advanced	22	4	10	3	11
Number of students tested	23	24	32	37	27
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient			41		
Advanced			6		
Number of students tested			17		
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient			18		33
Advanced			9		8
Number of students tested			12		12
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Assessment - California Alternative Performance Assessment (CAPA), This assessment is given to students with significant cognitive disabilities when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Service

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	91	69	61	54	59
Advanced	40	33	17	23	37
Number of students tested	45	67	70	77	54
Percent of total students tested	87	100	97	100	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	8	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	90	51	41	39	36
Advanced	35	28	4	14	18
Number of students tested	21	35	27	28	11
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient		50	50		
Advanced		25	10		
Number of students tested		12	10		
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient		58	36	18	30
Advanced		25	0	9	20
Number of students tested		12	11	11	10
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Testing - California Alternative Testing Program (CAPA). Students with significant cognitive disabilities take this test when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2007

Publisher: Educational Testing Services

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	78	67	39	56	69
Advanced	36	30	19	29	39
Number of students tested	45	67	71	77	54
Percent of total students tested	87	100	99	100	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	8	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	76	60	15	50	64
Advanced	30	28	4	29	27
Number of students tested	21	35	28	28	11
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient		50	30		
Advanced		25	10		
Number of students tested		12	10		
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient		58	9	18	10
Advanced		17	2	18	10
Number of students tested		12	11	11	10
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Assessment - California Alternative Assessment Program (CAPA). This test is given to students with significant cognitive disabilities when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: STAR - California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Services

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	70	52	48	57	37
Advanced	25	6	18	23	9
Number of students tested	60	69	76	61	54
Percent of total students tested	95	99	99	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	65	30	35	40	15
Advanced	25	0	17	7	0
Number of students tested	26	30	23	15	20
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient	36	42			
Advanced	27	8			
Number of students tested	11	12			
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient			18		20
Advanced			0		0
Number of students tested			11		10
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Testing - California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). Students with significant cognitive disabilities are given this assessment when indicated in their IEP.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: STAR - California Standards Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2003-2008

Publisher: Educational Testing Services

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient	64	56	47	69	49
Advanced	19	13	18	28	19
Number of students tested	58	69	77	61	54
Percent of total students tested	92	99	100	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	1	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient	63	43	43	53	20
Advanced	9	0	17	20	10
Number of students tested	24	30	23	15	20
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
Proficient	64	50			
Advanced	18	17			
Number of students tested	11	12			
3. (specify subgroup): Special Education					
Proficient			9		10
Advanced			0		10
Number of students tested			11		10
4. (specify subgroup):					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Alternative Testing - California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA). This test is administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities when indicated in their IEP.